CLAIMS

Please cancel Claim 22 without prejudice.

24. (Amended) A method of forming a refractory metal silicide layer comprising:

forming a titanium metal layer over a silicon containing substrate;

providing stress inducing atoms into the titanium metal layer, the compressive stress inducing atoms being larger than silicon atoms;

after the providing, first annealing the titanium metal layer containing the compressive stress inducing atoms to form a titanium silicide layer substantially of a first crystalline phase; and

second annealing the titanium silicide layer of the first crystalline phase under conditions effective to transform said titanium metal silicide layer to a more dense layer substantially of a second crystalline phase.

Please cancel Claims 25 and 26 without prejudice.

45. (Amended) A method of forming a refractory metal silicide comprising:

forming a compressive stress inducing material layer over a first side of a substrate;

forming a refractory metal silicide over the compressive stress inducing material layer, the refractory metal silicide comprising a first crystalline phase;

after forming the refractory metal silicide, annealing the refractory metal to form a refractory metal silicide of a second crystalline phase

Please Add, Claims 52-58

52. The method of Claim 24, where the first crystalline phase is C49 and the second crystalline phase is C54.

53. The method of Claims 24, where the compressive stress inducing atoms comprise germanium atoms.

54. The method of Claim 24, where the first crystalline phase is C49, the second crystalline phase is C54 and the compressive stress inducing atoms comprise germanium atoms.

55. The method of Claim 45, where the first crystalline phase is C49 and the second crystalline phase is C54.